

Article - Natural Resources

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§5–307.

(a) In this section, “Fund” means the Mel Noland Woodland Incentives and Fellowship Fund.

(b) There is a Mel Noland Woodland Incentives and Fellowship Fund in the Department.

(c) The purpose of the Fund is to finance:

(1) The Woodland Incentives Program and the cost–share assistance established under this subtitle; and

(2) The Mel Noland Fellowship Program established under this subtitle.

(d) The Department shall administer the Fund.

(e) (1) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7–302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(2) The Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately and the Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(f) (1) The Fund consists of:

(i) As provided in § 13–306 of the Tax – Property Article, up to \$200,000 annually of the proceeds of the tax imposed by § 13–302 of the Tax – Property Article that are attributable to the taxation of instruments of writing that transfer title to parcels of land that are entirely woodland;

(ii) Revenues collected by the Department from the payment of charges imposed for Department assistance in implementation of an approved practice;

(iii) Money distributed from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund under § 8–2A–04 of this article;

(iv) Subject to approval by the Secretary and the Board of Public Works, a portion of the revenues derived from the forestry practices on

designated lands owned and managed by the Department, that are conducted in accordance with applicable State law and regulation; and

(v) Money appropriated to the Fund under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(2) For fiscal year 2021 and each subsequent fiscal year, the Governor shall appropriate \$50,000 to the Fund.

(g) The Department shall use the Fund:

(1) To help fund the Woodland Incentives Program and the cost-share assistance established under this subtitle;

(2) To fund the Mel Noland Fellowship Program established under this subtitle;

(3) For administrative costs calculated in accordance with § 1–103(b)(2) of this article;

(4) To offset the costs of the Forest and Park Service for developing and approving forest stewardship plans on privately owned forest lands;

(5) To provide annual grants to the forest conservancy district boards under § 5–605 of this title, to help facilitate their respective outreach efforts to encourage forest land owners to develop forest stewardship and other forest conservation management plans;

(6) To establish a forest health emergency contingency program to help:

(i) Maintain the health and vitality of publicly owned and privately owned forest lands; and

(ii) Prevent or control large degradation caused by natural threats;

(7) To provide financial assistance, as provided in the State budget, for the administration of an urban and community forestry program established under § 5–426 of this title, including:

(i) Increasing the number of communities with tree canopy goals;

(ii) Facilitating compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Program's forestry targets;

(iii) Supporting the use of urban tree canopy expansion for air quality improvement purposes; and

(iv) Helping achieve implementation of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative offset opportunities in urban areas;

(8) To help fund a forest marketing and utilization program in the Department to provide financial assistance to help support, stimulate, and market innovative and creative ways to enhance the production of value-added wood products;

(9) To help the Department, in cooperation with appropriate public and private sector entities, develop and expand:

(i) A forest mitigation banking system;

(ii) A carbon credit or carbon sequestration program;

(iii) A clean water credit trading system;

(iv) An environmental services credit trading program; and

(v) A renewable energy credit trading system; and

(10) To help offset administrative costs for providing staff assistance to the Sustainable Forestry Council established under § 5–204 of this title.

(h) The amount of revenues collected under subsection (f)(1)(i) of this section shall be included in the report required under § 16–103 of the Local Government Article.

(i) (1) The amount of the grants under subsection (g)(5) of this section shall be determined by the Department and eligibility for the grants shall be contingent on each board providing an in-kind match as certified by the Secretary.

(2) For fiscal year 2021 and each subsequent fiscal year, the Department shall direct \$50,000 from the Fund to the Mel Noland Fellowship Program for the purpose of:

(i) Paying stipends to fellows, in accordance with § 5–308 of this subtitle; and

(ii) Offsetting the cost of administering the Mel Noland Fellowship Program, including the cost of recruiting, selecting, and supervising fellows.

(j) On or before September 30 of each year, the Department shall report to the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee and the House Environment and Transportation Committee, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, on the use of funds credited to the Fund, including an identification of and the reasons for those revenues derived from forestry practices on designated lands owned and managed by the Department that were not credited to the Fund.

(k) (1) The Treasurer shall invest the money of the Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(2) Any investment earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the General Fund of the State.

(l) Expenditures from the Fund may be made only in accordance with the State budget.

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